Z
V55
1903

DONALD PRITCHETT BEAN

The Bancroft Library

University of California • Berkeley

Gift of

Mr. & Mrs. Donald P. Bean

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

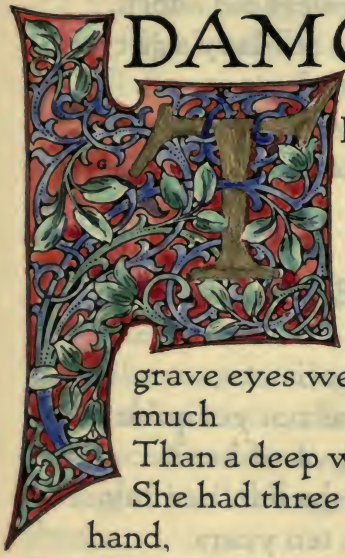
http://www.archive.org/details/blesseddamozelpo00rossrich

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL · A POEM by DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI REPRINTED FROM THE GERM

NOTE

The portrait of Rossetti here given as frontispiece is from the painting by G. F. Watts. "The Blessed Damozel" facing verses X and XI is from the painting by Rossetti made for Lord Mount-Temple in 1874.

THE BLESSED DAMOZEL



HE BLESSED DAMOZEL leaned out
From the gold bar of Heaven:
Her blue grave eyes were deeper much
Than a deep water, even.
She had three lilies in her hand,
And the stars in her hair were seven.

II

HER ROBE, UNGIRT FROM
clasp to hem,
No wrought flowers did adorn,
But a white rose of Mary's gift
On the neck meetly worn;
And her hair, lying down her back,
Was yellow like ripe corn.

III

HERSEEMED SHE SCARCE
had been a day
One of God's choristers;
The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of her's;
Albeit to them she left, her day
Had counted as ten years.

IV

(TO ONE IT IS TEN YEARS
of years:
. . . . Yet now, here in this place,
Surely she leaned o'er me,—her hair
Fell all about my face. . . . .
Nothing: the Autumn-fall of leaves.
The whole year sets apace.)

V

IT WAS THE TERRACE OF
God's house
That she was standing on,—
By God built over the sheer depth
In which Space is begun;
So high, that looking downward
thence,
She could scarce see the sun.

VI

IT LIES FROM HEAVEN
across the flood
Of ether, as a bridge.
Beneath, the tides of day and night
With flame and blackness ridge
The void, as low as where this earth
Spins like a fretful midge.

VII

BUT IN THOSE TRACTS,
with her, it was
The peace of utter light
And silence. For no breeze may stir
Along the steady flight
Of seraphim; no echo there,
Beyond all depth or height.

VIII

HEARD HARDLY, SOME OF
her new friends,
Playing at holy games,
Spake, gentle-mouthed, among
themselves,
Their virginal chaste names;
And the souls, mounting up to God,
Went by her like thin flames.

IX

AND STILL SHE BOWED
herself, and stooped
Into the vast waste calm;
Till her bosom's pressure must have
made
The bar she leaned on warm,
And the lilies lay as if asleep
Along her bended arm.

X

FROM THE FIXT LULL OF
heaven, she saw
Time, like a pulse, shake fierce
Through all the worlds. Her gaze
still strove,
In that steep gulph, to pierce
The swarm: and then she spake,
as when
The stars sang in their spheres.

XI

"I WISH THAT HE WERE
come to me,
For he will come," she said.
"Have I not prayed in solemn heaven?
On earth, has he not prayed?
Are not two prayers a perfect strength?
And shall I feel afraid?

1874

XII

"WHEN ROUND HIS HEAD
the aureole clings,
And he is clothed in white,
I'll take his hand, and go with him
To the deep wells of light,
And we will step down as to a
stream
And bathe there in God's sight.

XIII

"WE TWO WILL STAND
beside that shrine,
Occult, withheld, untrod,
Whose lamps tremble continually
With prayer sent up to God;
And where each need, revealed,
expects
Its patient period.

XIV

"WE TWO WILL LIE I' THE
shadow of
That living mystic tree
Within whose secret growth the Dove
Sometimes is felt to be,
While every leaf that His plumes
touch
Saith His name audibly.

XV

"AND I MYSELF WILL
teach to him—
I myself, lying so,—
The songs I sing here; which his
mouth
Shall pause in, hushed and slow,
Finding some knowledge at each pause
And some new thing to know."

XVI

(ALAS! TO HER WISE
simple mind
These things were all but known
Before: they trembled on her
sense,—
Her voice had caught their tone.
Alas for lonely Heaven! Alas
For life wrung out alone!

XVII

ALAS, AND THOUGH THE
end were reached? . . .
Was THY part understood
Or borne in trust? And for her sake
Shall this too be found good?—
May the close lips that knew not
prayer
Praise ever, though they would?)

XVIII

"WE TWO," SHE SAID,
"will seek the groves
Where the lady Mary is,
With her five handmaidens, whose names
Are five sweet symphonies:—
Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,
Margaret and Rosalys.

XIX

"CIRCLE-WISE SIT THEY,
with bound locks
And bosoms covered;
Into the fine cloth, white like flame,
Weaving the golden thread,
To fashion the birth-robes for them
Who are just born, being dead.

XX

"HE SHALL FEAR HAPLY,
and be dumb.
Then I will lay my cheek
To his, and tell about our love,
Not once abashed or weak:
And the dear Mother will approve
My pride, and let me speak.

XXI

"HERSELF SHALL BRING
us, hand in hand,
To Him round whom all souls
Kneel—the unnumber'd solemn
heads
Bowed with their aureoles:
And Angels, meeting us, shall sing
To their citherns and citoles.

XXII

"THERE WILL I ASK OF
Christ the Lord
Thus much for him and me:—
To have more blessing than on earth
In nowise; but to be
As then we were,—being as then
At peace. Yea, verily.

XXIII

"YEA, VERILY; WHEN HE
is come
We will do thus and thus:
Till this my vigil seem quite strange
And almost fabulous;
We two will live at once, one life;
And peace shall be with us."

XXIV

SHE GAZED, AND LISTENed, and then said,
Less sad of speech than mild;
"All this is when he comes." She ceased:
The light thrilled past her, filled
With Angels, in strong level lapse.
Her eyes prayed, and she smiled.

XXV

(I SAW HER SMILE.) BUT soon their flight
Was vague 'mid the poised spheres.
And then she cast her arms along
The golden barriers,
And laid her face between her hands,
And wept. (I heard her tears.)

HERE ENDS
THE BLESSED DAMOZEL· BY
DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI·
REPRINTED FROM THE GERM
FOR FEBRUARY M·DCCC·L
PRINTED & BOUND BY FRED
W· AND BERTHA M· GOUDY
AT THE VILLAGE PRESS· 110
COPIES PRINTED 98 FOR SALE

Park Ridge, Illinois, December, 1903

Fred W Goudy